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Agenda item 74

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/59/469)*]

59/116. International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996, 54/68 of 6 December 1999 and 58/89 of 9 December 2003,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet emerging new challenges, especially for developing countries,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies,[1]

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of

[1] Resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

further developing the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in this field,

Convinced of the importance of the recommendations in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999,[2] and the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[3]

Convinced also that the use of space science and technology and their applications, in such areas as telemedicine, tele-education and disaster management, and environmental protection as well as other Earth observation applications, contribute to achieving the objectives of the global conferences of the United Nations that address various aspects of economic, social and cultural development, inter alia, poverty eradication,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-seventh session,[4]

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-seventh session;[4]

2. *Urges* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space[5] to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties as well as incorporating them in their national legislation;

3. *Notes* that, at its forty-third session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/89;[6]

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to send to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of States that have not yet become parties to the above-mentioned international treaties, the letter[7] and document,[8] as endorsed by the Legal Subcommittee, encouraging their States to participate in those treaties, and to send a similar letter to intergovernmental organizations that have not yet declared their acceptance of the rights and obligations under those treaties;[8]

5. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-fourth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

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[2] See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19–30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

[3] See resolution 55/2.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/59/20).

[5] Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 34/68, annex).

[6] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/59/20), chap. II.D.

[7] A/AC.105/826, annex I, appendix I.

[8] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/59/20), chap. II.D, para. 150.

(*a*) Consider the following as regular agenda items:

(i) General exchange of views;

(ii) Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space;

(iii) Information on the activities of international organizations relating to space law;

(iv) Matters relating to:

a. The definition and delimitation of outer space;

b. The character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;

(*b*) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:

(i) Review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;[9]

(ii) Examination of the preliminary draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, opened for signature at Cape Town, South Africa, on 16 November 2001:

a. Considerations relating to the possibility of the United Nations serving as supervisory authority under the future protocol;

b. Considerations relating to the relationship between the terms of the future protocol and the rights and obligations of States under the legal regime applicable to outer space;

(*c*) Consider the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Committee;[10]

6. *Notes* that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-fourth session, will submit its proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered by the Subcommittee at its forty-fifth session in 2006;

7. *Also notes* that, in the context of paragraph 5 (*a*) (ii) above, the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-fourth session will reconvene its Working Group and review the need to extend the mandate of the Working Group beyond that session of the Subcommittee;

8. *Further notes* that, in the context of paragraph 5 (*a*) (iv) *a.* above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its Working Group on the item only to consider matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space;

9. *Notes* that the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its Working Group to consider the questions reflected in paragraphs 5 (*b*) (ii) *a.* and *b.* above separately;

10. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Legal Subcommittee, in the context of paragraph 5 (*b*) (ii) *a.* above, to establish an open-ended ad hoc working group to

[9] See resolution 47/68.

[10] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 199.

continue between the forty-third and forty-fourth sessions of the Subcommittee, the consideration of the question of the appropriateness of the United Nations acting as supervisory authority, and notes that the working group would prepare a report, including the text of a draft resolution, to be submitted to the Subcommittee for consideration at its forty-fourth session;[11]

11. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 5 (*c*) above, the Legal Subcommittee should establish a working group in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Committee;[10]

12. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-first session, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/89;[12]

13. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-second session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(*a*) Consider the following items:

(i) General exchange of views and introduction to reports submitted on national activities;

(ii) United Nations Programme on Space Applications;

(iii) Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III);

(iv) Matters relating to remote-sensing of the Earth by satellite, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth's environment;

(*b*) Consider the following items in accordance with the work plans adopted by the Committee:[13]

(i) Space debris;

(ii) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space;

(iii) Space-system-based telemedicine;

(iv) Near-Earth objects;

(v) Space-system-based disaster management support;

(*c*) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:

(i) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to

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[11] Ibid., *Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/59/20), para. 170.

[12] Ibid., chap. II.C.

[13] See A/AC.105/761, para. 130, and *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/59/20), paras. 141 and 144, for item (i); A/AC.105/804, annex III, for item (ii); *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 138, for item (iii); A/AC.105/823, annex II, para. 18, for item (iv); and A/AC.105/823, annex II, para. 15, for item (v).

developments in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;

(ii) Support to proclaim the year 2007 the International Geophysical and Heliophysical Year;

14. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-second session will submit its proposal to the Committee for a draft provisional agenda for the forty-third session of the Subcommittee, in 2006;

15. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation, in liaison with member States, be invited to arrange a symposium to address high-resolution and hyperspectral satellite data integration for precision farming, environmental monitoring and possible new applications, with as wide a participation as possible, to be held during the first week of the forty-second session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee;

16. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraphs 13 (*a*) (ii) and (iii) and 14 above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-second session should reconvene the Working Group of the Whole;

17. *Also agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 13 (*b*) (i) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-second session, should reconvene the Working Group on Space Debris to consider, as necessary, the proposals of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee on space debris mitigation and any related comments that might be received;[14]

18. *Further agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 13 (*b*) (ii) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-second session, should reconvene its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;

19. *Endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2005, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications and endorsed by the Committee;[15]

20. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the African regional centres for space science and technology education, in the French language and in the English language, located in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, as well as the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, continued their education programmes in 2004, that all the above regional centres have entered into an affiliation agreement with the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, and that the Office is providing technical support to the Government of Jordan for the establishment of the regional centre for space science and technology education for Western Asia;

21. *Welcomes* the memorandum of understanding between the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat and the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, under which the parties demonstrated their

[14] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/59/20), paras. 141 and 144.

[15] Ibid., para. 70; see also A/AC.105/815, sects. II-IV.

intention to collaborate in promoting and implementing joint activities, and invites the Pro Tempore Secretariat to inform the Committee of the work accomplished;

22. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Government of Ecuador is considering positively hosting the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas, to be held in Quito in the second half of 2005 or in 2006, and that the convening of the Conference will be in accordance with the desire of Member States in the Latin American and Caribbean region to institutionalize the Space Conference of the Americas;

23. *Also notes with satisfaction* that concerning the report on the review of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, the Committee, at its forty-seventh session, approved the draft report of the Committee as finalized by the Working Group which was reconvened at that session to prepare the report, and submitted the report to the General Assembly for use in its review and appraisal of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III at its fifty-ninth session;[16]

24. *Recommends* that more attention be paid and political support be provided to all matters relating to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment;

25. *Considers* that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

26. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

27. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in the developing countries;

28. *Notes* that space science and technology and their applications could make important contributions to economic, social and cultural development and welfare as indicated in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",[2] notes with satisfaction the convening of a conference entitled "International Conference on Space and Water: Towards Sustainable Development and Human Security" in the context of the International Air and Space Fair, held at Santiago de Chile from 29 March to 4 April 2004, and also notes that the next Fair will be held in 2006;

[16] See A/59/174.

29. *Notes with satisfaction* the convening of the International Seminar on Satellite Technology Applications in Communications and Remote Sensing in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, in October 2004 in cooperation with the Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology Applications;

30. *Agrees* that the benefits of space technology and its applications should be prominently brought to the attention of conferences organized within the United Nations system to address global issues relating to social, economic and cultural development and that the use of space technology should be promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[3]

31. *Notes with satisfaction* the increased efforts of the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to promote the use of space science and technology and their applications in carrying out actions recommended in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation")[17] and the joint initiative taken by the Committee and the Inter-Agency Meeting to compile a list of space-related initiatives and programmes that correspond to recommendations contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;[18]

32. *Notes* that space technology could play a central role in disaster reduction and that both the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee could contribute to the follow-up to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005;

33. *Urges* entities of the United Nations system, particularly those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, to examine, in cooperation with the Committee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration, particularly in the areas relating to, inter alia, food security and increasing opportunities for education;

34. *Invites* the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to continue to contribute to the work of the Committee and to report to the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work conducted at its annual session;

35. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, and agrees that during its consideration of the matter, the Committee could consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas and the role space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

36. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider a report on the activities of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue as a part of its consideration of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications under the

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[17] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[18] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/59/20), para. 28; and A/AC.105/2004/CRP.8.

agenda item entitled "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee", and invites Member States to report on their activities regarding the System;

37. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-eighth session, its agenda item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status";

38. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-eighth session, its agenda item entitled "Space and society" under the special theme for the focus of discussions for the period 2004–2006 entitled "Space and education", in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Committee;[19]

39. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider, at its forty-eighth session, its agenda item entitled "Space and water" and urges entities of the United Nations system and invites other intergovernmental entities dealing with issues relating to the use and management of water resources as well as space agencies to contribute to the work of the Committee by, inter alia, sharing their experience in the use of space-related technology for water resources management;

40. *Also agrees* that a symposium on space and archaeology should be held during the forty-eighth session of the Committee;

41. *Notes* that in accordance with the agreement reached by the Committee at its forty-sixth session on the measures relating to the future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[20] on the basis of the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[21] the Group of African States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of Western European and Other States nominated their candidates for the offices of Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur of the Committee, Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee and Chairman of the Committee, respectively, for the period 2006–2007, at the forty-seventh session of the Committee, for its consideration;

42. *Urges* the Group of Asian States and the Group of Eastern European States to reach a consensus agreement on their candidates for the offices of Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the First Vice-Chairman of the Committee, respectively, before the forty-eighth session of the Committee;

43. *Agrees* that the Committee should reach agreement on all the officers of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2006–2007 and that, for this purpose, the Committee should include in the agenda of its forty-eighth session an item on the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for that period;

44. *Decides* that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Thailand shall become members of the Committee;

45. *Requests* the Committee to consider ways to improve participation in its work by member States and entities with observer status, with a view to agreeing on specific recommendations in that regard at its forty-eighth session;

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[19] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 239.

[20] Ibid., annex II, paras. 4–9.

[21] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/52/20), annex I; see also *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, appendix III.

46. *Notes* that each of the regional groups has responsibility to actively promote the participation in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies of the member States of the Committee that are also members of the respective regional group, and agrees that the regional groups should consider this Committee-related matter among their members;

47. *Invites* the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to consider at its twenty-fifth session, in 2005, the question of the enhancement of the participation of the entities of the United Nations system in the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees, and requests the Office for Outer Space Affairs, in its capacity as the secretariat of the Inter-Agency Meeting, to report to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, at their sessions in 2005, on the outcome of the discussions of the Inter-Agency Meeting;

48. *Agrees* that the Legal Subcommittee should, at its forty-fourth session, address the level of participation of the entities having permanent observer status with the Committee and report to the Committee, at its forty-eighth session, on means of enhancing their participation in the work of the Legal Subcommittee;

49. *Urges* the Committee to expand the scope of international cooperation relating to the social, economic, ethical and human dimension in space science and technology applications;

50. *Requests* entities of the United Nations system and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, to enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with reports on the issues dealt with in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies;

51. *Requests* the Committee to identify and consider new areas and mechanisms of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space to strengthen multilateralism, in accordance with the preamble to the present resolution, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future.

71st plenary meeting
10 December 2004